

pay for the EITC, without further Congressional action this tax credit will expire at the end of the year.

I introduced the Combat Pay Tax Flexibility Act to ensure that this tax savings provision is always there for the military families that need it. Soldiers who serve in hostile places make a great sacrifice for our country, and the least we can do is help them make the most of the tax savings available to them.

I would like to thank Chairman RANGEL for working with me to incorporate the Combat Pay Tax Flexibility Act into the legislation before us today, and for moving this legislation swiftly. I urge all of my colleagues to vote in favor of H.R. 3997 today to ensure that our troops have the financial resources they need throughout the cycle of deployment.

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased this bill, H.R. 3997, is being considered by the House today and specifically that it includes language similar to the legislation, H.R. 2540, introduced by myself and Congressman POMEROY.

Our legislation was written to assist the families of members of our military and National Guard who are killed while on active duty. It was developed after Congressman POMEROY and I each met with Mrs. Victoria Johnson from my central Washington district.

While grieving the loss of her husband, Major Alan Johnson, Victoria discovered that State law treated her husband as a retiree rather than a brave servicemember. Victoria worked to change State law, and with her support, Congressman POMEROY and I introduced legislation to ensure that servicemembers who die protecting our Nation will have their time on active military duty counted into their employer's retirement benefits.

This simple change ensures that the survivors of our brave servicemembers, like Major Johnson, receive the maximum amount of their loved ones' pension benefits, and are not penalized for their family members' volunteering to serve their country.

This is the right thing to do and I encourage my colleagues to support this bill.

Mr. NEAL of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Washington (Mr. McDERMOTT) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3997, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the yeas have it.

Mr. NEAL of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

EXPRESSING SYMPATHY FOR VICTIMS OF OCTOBER 28, 2007, FIRE IN OCEAN ISLE BEACH, NORTH CAROLINA

Mr. LYNCH. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the reso-

lution (H. Res. 787) expressing the support and sympathy of the House of Representatives and the people of the United States for the victims of the tragic fire that occurred in Ocean Isle Beach, North Carolina, on October 28, 2007.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 787

Whereas in the early morning of October 28, 2007, flames broke out at a beach house in Ocean Isle Beach, North Carolina;

Whereas the fire spread quickly and took the lives of seven college students, six attended the University of South Carolina and one went to Clemson University: Lauren Mahon of Simpsonville, South Carolina; Allison Walden of Chagrins Falls, Ohio; Travis Cale, Justin Anderson and Emily Yelton of Greenville, South Carolina; William Rhea of Florence, South Carolina, and Cassidy Pendley of Chapin, South Carolina;

Whereas 6 University of South Carolina students were injured while escaping the flames and were treated at Brunswick Community Hospital;

Whereas local community members rushed to alert and assist emergency personnel to support the students and their families in the aftermath of the tragedy;

Whereas firefighters, paramedics, police officers, and other emergency personnel from the surrounding communities responded quickly and worked bravely to rescue the injured and extinguish the fire;

Whereas the State of North Carolina and local government officials responded to the fire and its aftermath quickly, effectively, and compassionately;

Whereas the immediate outpouring of support, assistance and compassion from the Nation and South Carolinians is greatly appreciated; and

Whereas the students, faculty, staff, and officials at Clemson University and University of South Carolina have come together as a university community to remember the fallen students and provide strength and support to its respective campuses through this difficult time: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) expresses its deepest condolences to the families and friends of Lauren Mahon, Allison Walden, Travis Cale, Justin Anderson, Emily Yelton, William Rhea, and Cassidy Pendley; and offers its hope for the quick and full recovery of those students who were injured in the fire;

(2) expresses immense gratitude for the efforts of countless emergency response personnel, local, State, and Federal officials, health care providers, volunteers, and citizens who have been part of the response; and

(3) expresses its support for all of the students, faculty, administration, and staff at the University of South Carolina and Clemson University as they heal from this tragedy.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. LYNCH) and the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. JORDAN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Massachusetts.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. LYNCH. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Massachusetts?

There was no objection.

Mr. LYNCH. Mr. Speaker, as a member of the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, I am pleased to join my colleagues in the consideration of H. Res. 787 which expresses the support and sympathy of the House of Representatives of the people of the United States for the victims of the tragic fire recently that occurred in Ocean Isle Beach, North Carolina. House Resolution 787, which has 66 cosponsors, was introduced by my friend and colleague Mr. JAMES CLYBURN.

Mr. Speaker, on Sunday, October 28, 2007, seven college students perished in a fire in Ocean Isle Beach, North Carolina. They were victims of an early morning fire that engulfed a two-story house. There were also six survivors who were hospitalized but later released.

Of the seven students who perished, six were from the University of South Carolina, and one was from Clemson University.

We in this Congress express our heartfelt sympathy for the victims, their families and the campus communities that have been affected.

□ 1215

These students were among our best and brightest. Their striving, their aspirations, and the hope and support of their families, especially their parents, for their future embodies a shining example of what is best about America.

The Ocean Isle Beach's fire claimed the precious lives of seven young people who had so much to live for and so much to give. We express our deepest sympathy to the victims and their families.

Mr. Speaker, I commend my colleague Representative JIM CLYBURN for seeking to express the deepest sympathy of the House of Representatives on this sad occasion, and I urge the swift passage of this bill.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. JORDAN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I rise to mourn the passing of seven of this Nation's young students. On the morning of October 28, 2007, a fire quickly swept through the beach house in Ocean Isle Beach, North Carolina, where they were spending a weekend.

Six of the seven were students at the University of South Carolina. The seventh attended Clemson. All were filled with much promise.

With this in mind, I express my deepest condolences to the friends and families of the seven. Rest assured that you are in all of our thoughts and prayers.

I would also like to take this opportunity to commend the entire community of Ocean Isle Beach, North Carolina, for its response to this tragedy. From the very onset of the flames, local citizens rushed to alert and assist

emergency responders. These responders then worked bravely to rescue those trapped inside, aid the injured, and extinguish the fire.

Unfortunately, the blaze was too powerful and claimed seven young lives. However, without the adept response of all involved, the tragic toll of this blaze would have surely been higher. It is with all this in mind that I would like to take this opportunity to commend those involved in the response. Our sincere gratitude goes out to all of you.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of our time.

Mr. LYNCH. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to my friend and colleague, Mr. JAMES CLYBURN, of South Carolina.

Mr. CLYBURN. I thank my colleague for yielding me the time.

Mr. Speaker, this resolution memorializes and commemorates the lives of seven students from the University of South Carolina and Clemson University who perished in last week's tragic beach house fire in Ocean Isle Beach, North Carolina.

I proudly represent the University of South Carolina, and I rise to thank the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform for its prompt action on this resolution and to once again extend my deepest condolences to the families, friends, and loved ones of those University of South Carolina and Clemson students who we lost in this unfortunate event. They should all know that we will continue to keep them and their loved ones in our prayers as they mourn their tremendous loss.

There's little that we cherish more than seeing our children and grandchildren go off to school seeking to acquire the knowledge and skills that they will need to pursue their dreams and aspirations. It is an incredible feeling. And to have that promise cut short in such a dramatic and tragic way is probably more than anyone who has not had the experience can possibly imagine.

As we mourn with the University of South Carolina and Clemson University communities at this solemn time, we should all take some solace in knowing that these young people represented the best of our hopes and dreams for the future. Through their extracurricular activities and academic successes, they served as strong role models for future generations and as sources of pride for their families and friends. It is only fitting that we honor them for being the bright beacons of light that they were and that their loved ones will always remember them as being.

No words or sympathetic sentiments will ever undo the tragic loss endured by the University of South Carolina and Clemson communities. However, by passing this resolution, it is my hope that these communities understand that this congressional body stands in unison in offering our prayers and condolences.

May God bless all those affected by this tragedy.

Mr. JORDAN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. BARRETT).

Mr. BARRETT of South Carolina. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, on October 28, 2007, a tragic and accidental fire in Ocean Isle Beach, North Carolina, claimed seven very young lives. Six of the victims were students at the University of South Carolina: Cassidy Fae Pendley, Lauren Astrid Kristiana Mahon, Justin Michael Anderson, Travis Lane Cale, Allison Walden, William Rhea. One of the victims, Emily Lauren Yelton, was a sophomore at Clemson University, a graduate of J.L. Mann High School in Greenville, a member of the Delta Zeta sorority and a member of Young Life of Greenville.

These brilliant young college students were sisters, brothers, devoted sons and daughters, athletes, instructors, friends, volunteers, coaches, and leaders. Family members and friends have recounted how each one has given support, made a difference and brightened people's lives.

I stand here today to support H. Res. 787, which is a resolution sponsored by Congressman JIM CLYBURN to express much-needed support for those fire victims.

I would also like to recognize and offer sympathy to the victims' families and let them know that South Carolina and the people of this Nation, Mr. Speaker, will always honor those names that we loved and lost.

Mr. LYNCH. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. MCINTYRE).

Mr. MCINTYRE. I thank the gentleman.

I rise today in strong support of H. Res. 787, which my friend and colleague Representative JIM CLYBURN of South Carolina has filed and which expresses the support and sympathy of the House of Representatives and the people of the United States for the victims of the tragic fire that occurred in Ocean Isle Beach, North Carolina, about 10 days ago on October 28.

As you may know, I represent the town of Ocean Isle Beach; and like all of my constituents, I was saddened by the events that took place just a few days ago.

Ocean Isle Beach is a family community, a place many do love to come and spend time with friends, and the loss of seven college students and injuries by six more indeed was a tragic turn of events that brought this small beach town, the State of North Carolina, and our neighbor, the State of South Carolina where the students were in school, and this Nation to its knees.

I'm honored to support this essential and timely measure which also expresses gratitude for the efforts of all the emergency personnel, law enforcement, fire and rescue that were in-

involved in this horrific situation, and our gratitude to Mayor Debbie Smith and the other local officials in that community, as well as to the Brunswick County officials and other community members and private citizens that responded to the fire and that reached out to help those in need and the families that were affected by this tragic situation.

As we gather today to express our condolences to the families and friends of the students that perished and as we offer our hope for the full recovery of the students that were injured, I urge all of us to reflect on the importance of these individuals' lives and express our sympathies to those families who will carry this loss with them.

Mr. Speaker, we're a strong Nation. Ocean Isle Beach is a strong community. And I know that events like the fire on October 28 will demonstrate even more our strength and our unity in times of tragedy.

May we all stand here in this body today, indeed may we all stand as a Nation together, in remembrance of these students and pledge our commitment to their families and friends. We pray for God's comfort, His peace and His strength to be with them always.

Mr. JORDAN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. WILSON).

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank Mr. CLYBURN and my colleagues for bringing this resolution to the floor.

I'm deeply saddened by the circumstances we're addressing today. As we have all learned, seven students were killed in a house fire that took place at Ocean Isle Beach, North Carolina, over a week ago. This tragic accident reminds us all how precious life is, and I want to express my condolences to the families and friends of these students.

As a University of South Carolina Law School graduate and a parent of a current Clemson student, I've grown to know the strength and character of these communities. I have had the privilege of getting to know many of their students, faculty, and administrators all my life. Under the leadership of USC president Andrew Sorensen and Clemson president Jim Barker, the students and families of these two universities have found comfort and kinship during this difficult time.

I also want to extend my heartfelt condolences to the Sigma Alpha Epsilon fraternity and the Delta Delta Delta sorority who lost members in this tragic fire. My father and my mother were members of these two USC organizations respectively; and as a member of a fraternity, with three sons in a fraternity, I know the bond that these students and alumni feel for one another and the grief they are experiencing.

South Carolina's media have been very thoughtful, respectful, and helpful in providing tributes to the students.

Today, we offer our support and comfort to the students who were injured in this terrible accident. We will continue to pray for their full and speedy recovery.

Additionally, we must recognize the brave members of the local fire departments and emergency personnel, as well as the Ocean Isle Beach citizens who responded to the fire and called for help.

Again, I want to thank my colleague and long-time friend Congressman JIM CLYBURN for bringing this resolution to the floor.

Mr. LATOURETTE. Mr. Speaker, this past weekend, more than 600 people gathered at Federated Church in Chagrin Falls OH, to mourn the loss of Allison Walden, 19, a 2006 graduate of Chagrin Falls High School and the daughter of Terry and Diane Walden of Chagrin Falls.

Allison was one of seven students to die in the tragic beach house fire in North Carolina.

Her father, Terry, said she was a wonderful girl and full of life. She had a scholarship to University of South Carolina, where she was a sophomore studying pre-med and a member of the Delta Delta Delta sorority. She had planned to return to her beloved Chagrin Falls after graduation and study anesthesiology at Case Western Reserve University.

This senseless fire that took the lives of seven wonderful young people capped a very difficult year for the Walden family.

Their son, Greg, a 2005 Chagrin Falls graduate, is a student at Virginia Tech and was there in April when a deranged student shot up the campus, killing 33 people. Fortunately, Greg, an honors engineering student, was unharmed in that horrific attack. I can't imagine as a parent going through that, and then losing your only daughter just five months later in another tragedy. It is just unspeakably cruel.

As their father said, "What is the chance that out of all the schools in the country that our children would go where tragic events unfold?"

On behalf of the 14th Congressional District, my sympathies go to the Walden family on their horrible loss, and may they find comfort in their family, friends, faith and community.

Mr. JORDAN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. LYNCH. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. LYNCH) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 728.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

EXPRESSING SUPPORT AND SYMPATHY FOR VICTIMS OF DEVASTATING FLOODING THAT OCCURRED IN OHIO

Mr. LYNCH. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 728) expressing the support and sympathy of the House of

Representatives and the people of the United States for the victims of the devastating flooding that occurred across many parts of Ohio in August 2007 and commending the communities, volunteer organizations, churches and emergency response agencies for their continuing work to restore the affected areas across the state.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 728

Whereas heavy rainstorms brought severe flooding to Ohio and the upper Midwest over the week of August 19, 2007;

Whereas, in many parts of Ohio, this was the worst flood since 1913 with nearly 15 inches of rain in some areas;

Whereas the record storms and flooding were responsible for up to 18 deaths across parts of the upper Midwest—some of these in Ohio;

Whereas over 500 citizens were forced to flee their homes and businesses and many hundreds of homes and businesses were damaged;

Whereas, on August 21, 2007, Allen, Crawford, Hancock, Hardin, Paulding, Putnam, Richland, Seneca, Van Wert and Wyandot counties made initial local emergency declaration;

Whereas, on August 22, 2007, Governor Ted Strickland issued a State disaster declaration for Allen, Crawford, Hancock, Hardin, Putnam, Richland, Seneca, Wyandot and Van Wert Counties;

Whereas, on August 27, 2007, President George W. Bush issued a Federal disaster declaration for Allen, Crawford, Hancock, Putnam, Richland and Wyandot Counties and later added Hardin and Seneca Counties; and

Whereas Michigan, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Illinois, Iowa and Indiana also experienced serious, storms, flooding and tornadoes: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) expresses its support and profoundest sympathy for the victims of the devastating flooding that occurred across much of Ohio and the surrounding region in August 2007;

(2) conveys its gratitude to the local, State and Federal officials and emergency personnel who responded to this emergency and continue working to restore normalcy in the affected counties;

(3) thanks the many volunteers, charitable organizations, business and individual donors, churches and religious organizations for their generosity in responding to this crisis; and

(4) commends the people of Ohio for their indomitable spirit and for the grace and magnanimity with which they have supported one another during the flooding and continuing recovery.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. LYNCH) and the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. JORDAN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Massachusetts.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. LYNCH. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Massachusetts?

There was no objection.

Mr. LYNCH. Mr. Speaker, as a member of the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, I'm pleased to join my colleagues in the consideration of H. Res. 728, which is a bill that expresses the support and sympathy of the House of Representatives and the people of the United States for the victims of the devastating floods that swept across Ohio in August of 2007.

H. Res. 728, which has 51 cosponsors, was introduced by my friend, Representative Jim Jordan, on October 10, 2007. H. Res. 728 was reported from the Oversight Committee on October 23, 2007, by voice vote.

Mr. Speaker, during the week of August 19, 2007, Ohio received over 15 inches of rain in a violent storm that swept across the State. Firefighters and volunteers from that State performed great acts of heroism in rescuing people from life-threatening conditions.

□ 1230

The storm caused major flooding that damaged many homes and businesses, and the water forced at least 500 families from their homes in several northern Ohio towns.

Governor Ted Strickland of Ohio declared states of emergency in nine counties in northwest and north central Ohio. This was, indeed, the worst flooding for Ohio since 1913.

I now rise in support of the victims in this disaster and to commend the State, local and Federal officials and emergency personnel for their response to this crisis situation.

I commend my colleague, Representative JORDAN, for seeking to express support and sympathy for the Ohio flood victims.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. JORDAN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I too rise in support of this resolution. Obviously, as a result of these devastating floods this summer, we had eight counties that were declared disaster counties in our State, 4½ of those counties I had the privilege of representing. The other 3½ counties were represented by our late friend, Congressman Paul Gillmor.

I want to commend Congressman Gillmor's staff for the help of Paul, of course, when he was with us, and then his staff for the great assistance they provided our office and others as we worked through this.

I also just want to take a moment to thank those local leaders, both our police, our fire, our EMS people, our local public officials and our State public officials who did just an outstanding job and also commend our Federal officials. FEMA was there in Ohio, the leaders were there, Director Paulison, as well as Mr. Preston with the SBA, and then they have been in Ohio for several months serving families and individuals and local governments who were devastated by these floods.